

PIONEER PATHS

Newsletter of the Herb Society of America
Pioneer Unit

April 2026

Volume 33, Number 8

MONTHLY UNIT MEETING

- Date:** April 9, 2026
- Time:** 9:30 a.m. Meet and Greet
10:00 a.m. Program followed by Meeting
- Location:** Brenham Presbyterian Church
900 South Jackson Street, Brenham
- Directions:** Exit Highway 290 to Business 36 North (Day Street) into Brenham. Continue north to College Street. Turn left to Jackson Street, and the church will be on your left.
- Program:** Your Yard Pharmacy: Medicinal Landscaping Plants
- Speaker:** Mark Vorderbruggen
ForagingTexas.com
- Angel:** Dawn Wilson
- Host Team:** Patty Mills, Johanna Hagler, Sherry Michie, Becky Nichols, and Tess Hartman
- Lunch:** Healthy Choices

April 1
Sprouting Grass
Full Moon

—
April 7
Board Meeting
Festival Hill
School Room 2



April 24
Arbor Day



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

A week after our March Event, I ran into a friend who said that they were really sad that they had not been able to attend the Plant Sale this year. They had heard, though, from others who had attended, that it was the most amazing plant sale they had ever attended, that it was the best plant sale ever.

Congratulations on all your hard work to make the Pioneer Unit Plant Sale and Thyme Well Spent Shoppe Sale the most prestigious in our area!! People started arriving by 7:30 on Friday morning, and the line stretched out around the parking lot. It was incredible to see. The ticket writers and cashiers had their hands full. They may have had to soak their hands in an ice bath when they got home. Fortunately, all the shoppers kept their cool and everyone was taken care of quickly. We don't have the final numbers yet, but I can tell you we were very successful financially.

Special Thanks – Julia Johnson, Madeline Johnson, and Phoebe Lake did an outstanding job of arranging the plant deliveries; Leslie Conrads and the TWSS gang were ready to go early Friday morning (which helped to divert the plant shoppers' attention for a little while); Joanna Hagler collected wonderful items from the TWSS for the Forum speaker gift bags. It's nice to be able to give the speakers some of those special items that the Pioneer Unit members have made. It gives me great pleasure to show off your creativity. A lively group of volunteers helped with the Forum. Sally Reynolds, Shawn Helm, Kathy Carter, and Leah Pearce arrived before sunrise to help check-in the Forum attendees. Later, a group arrived to set the stage for the afternoon reception – Dawn Wilson, Barbara White, Shawn Helm, Jana Rinehart (the cookie master supreme), Joy Kamani, and Martha Neva. I appreciated Tess Hartman agreeing once again to serve as the emcee for the Forum. She was superb!

And a really super special thanks to all the members who volunteered in some capacity to make this a truly great event. I'm always caught off guard by how much it takes to make it happen. I know I was exhausted, and I suspect many of you were also. I'm glad the intense period only lasts a week, but I do know many of you work throughout the year to prepare items. You are all a blessing to the Unit and to me. I'm in awe of how much you give of yourselves. We have a special unit and it's because of all each of you do. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!

Upcoming Events

Membership Renewal – Yes, it's once again that time of the year. It starts in May. In an effort to make sure everyone's contact information is correct in the Directory, I need all members to complete a renewal form this year. You sometimes move, change your email address or your cell number, and sometimes I don't get that information. Also, please complete the form with your very best handwriting. I know my handwriting can be impossible to read at times. As with last year, we will only accept checks or cash for renewals, no credit cards.

Annual New Ulm Bee Jubilee will be held on May 2nd. I am looking for a member to volunteer to coordinate this event for the Pioneer Unit. It's a fun event, and we often get new members after people have visited our booth.

Thanks to Everyone for helping make the Plant Sale, TWSS, and Forum a huge success!!

Diana Sellers
Chair, Pioneer Unit



Photos from Diana Sellers

FROM THE PROGRAMS CHAIR

Join us on April 9, 2026, for an engaging and informative presentation by Mark "Merriwether" Vorderbruggen. His program, "Your Yard Pharmacy: Medicinal Landscaping Plants," will explore how everyday plants in your landscape can offer natural health benefits.

The event will be held at Brenham Presbyterian Church, located at 900 South Jackson Street in Brenham, Texas. Don't miss this opportunity to learn how to turn your yard into a source of wellness!

Tory Farley
Programs Chair

**MINUTES OF UNIT MEETING
HERB SOCIETY OF AMERICA - PIONEER UNIT
MARCH 5, 2026**

The March meeting of the Pioneer Unit was held at the School House at Festival Hill, Round Top, Texas.

Diana Sellers, Unit Chair, opened the meeting, The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of preparation for the Plant Sale/Forum/Thyme Well Spent Shoppe. The room for TWSS will not be available on Saturday and Sunday due to a piano concert in the room.

Julia Johnson, Plant Sale Co-Chair, detailed the tasks for the workday, a timeline for plant deliveries the following week, and open volunteer spots needing to be filled. On Thursday, PU members may shop at the Plant Sale from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. Members were reminded to wear their badges while shopping.

Phoebe Lake, Plant Sale Co-Chair, described the variety of plant pot sizes and their prices. Phoebe and Rob Lake constructed displays to show the sizes and prices of the pots.

Leslie Conrads, TWSS Chair, detailed the preparation in the TWSS including packing herbs and seeds, as well as setting up the shop.

Jana Rinehart asked members making cookies for Forum attendees to bring them to the concert hall by noon Saturday.

Royceanna Kendall, Treasurer, asked members to give receipts for reimbursement to her. The Unit's bank balance as of February 27, 2026, was \$56,523.82. Last year's balance on February 28, 2025, was \$53,745.16. Even with increased giving this fiscal year, our balance has increased compared to last year.

Diana shared the location of workshops on Friday. Attendees will meet in a student housing room and the schoolhouse.

Leah Pearce represented Cammie Beierle, Membership Chair. We have three new members: Karen Bookout, Jill Quimby, and Joy Kamani.

Connie Gwyn thanked hostesses Susan Bame, Bonnie Lout, and Louise Rice.

The meeting was adjourned, and members began preparing for our March event.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanna Hagler, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Happy Spring, Herbies!!!

We survived the Forum and Plant Sale! I'm excited to hear the report of the happy customers who participated in the event! I'm still preparing beds and planting. I finally started the Roselle seeds (they are soaking) for more Roselle jam! I'll have some seeds with me at the April meeting.

We've had a busy year with the Membership committee! We've had six new members join since September and a couple more are working toward membership completion. Please introduce yourself and help these new members feel at home!!

I wasn't at the March meeting so I don't have an attendance record (THANK YOU, Leah Pearce, for covering for me!!!). We had a lot of interest in what we do at the Plant Sale. I sent out about 20 emails to those who expressed interest. Look for them at the next meetings!!

We DO have a new member to introduce (if you haven't already worked with her!): Karen Bookout (husband Tom). She is a retired veterinarian and aspiring artist, member of Master Naturalists, member of Native Plants of Texas, member of the board of directors of the Gardenia Janssen Animal Shelter, and member of the League of Women Voters.

Karen's contact information is 109 South Live Oaks, Fayetteville, Texas 78940, 281-361-4555, knbookout1@gmail.com. Karen's birthdate is April 8. Please add this information to your directory!

I do want to remind you to please record your hours to Track It Forward! It makes a difference, and the number should about double after the Plant Sale and TWSS.

Membership renewal will begin next month. I'll have a renewal form for you to complete at the May membership table. Please bring your check made out to HSA Pioneer Unit to that meeting. The membership renewal amount is \$67/individual, \$98/joint, \$90/Business. Life members of HSA pay only the \$12 Unit renewal. If you have any questions, please ask!!

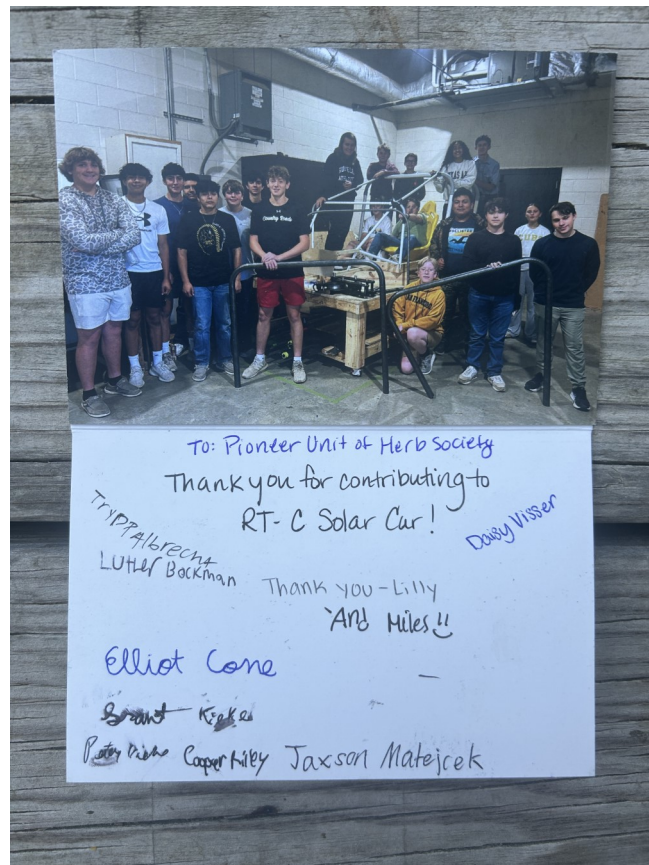
See you next week!
Cammie Beierle
Membership Chair
HSA, Pioneer Unit
281-844-4852



FESTIVAL HILL NEWS

Have you yet recovered from POS, Plant Overhaul Syndrome? I think I'm finally coming through the fog of it all. You know last year I loved my T-shirt that read "It's not hoarding if it's PLANTS!" Now, I'm thinking I fall deeply under the banner of Plant Addict... Herbophile...or maybe just Plant Lover Extraordinaire! Whatever you call it, it's fun... but it's work!

Speaking of work, those RTC Solar Club kids came out on Saturday of the Plant Sale and worked hard to help us breakdown and put away all the necessary things that allow us to turn a parking lot into a full-fledged plant nursery in a week's time, just like the fairy godmother came and waved her wand, and then at the stroke of midnight, POOF, back to a pumpkin, ahem, I mean a parking lot. Here is the sweet thank you card the RTC Solar crew sent in response to the \$500 donation we made to their project for their help with tear down.



It was quite a job trying to put everything away because we had a lot of plants leftover. For the past couple of weeks, many of you have taken the opportunity to come and shop the leftovers, and that has really helped! I'd like to thank Noreen Barker and Madeline Johnson for helping me with the necessary watering of the leftover plants. We also made donations of plants to the Brenham Early Learning Center, the Round Top - Carmine Elementary school garden, and some other local charities.

Continued on next page

Last Monday I was happy to have about 35 youth from Round Top - Carmine Elementary join me in the Gardens at Festival Hill. Noreen Barker, Susan Bame, Keelia Rich, and Chris Johnson helped me lead these kids from Pre-K, Kinder, and 1st grade through the Shakespeare, Mary, and Pharmacy Gardens, and then we went on a bit of a nature walk before making it to the back patio behind Menke where all the children enjoyed a sack lunch and were gifted a plant to take home -- thanks in part to the variety of leftover plants we had. They were thrilled. One student had a recommendation: "Next year," she said, "can we just do MORE planting!" The kids were so sweet and well behaved; they loved the chance to be outside on a lovely day and enjoyed helping us in the gardens.



Oh, and the contractor has finished his part of the greenhouse renovation! It needs a coat of paint now, and then to have electrical, propane, and plumbing finished. But the first step is complete!!

This Friday we will have our First Friday at Festival Hill. So please join us from 9 to 11 a.m., in or around the Pharmacy Garden. We will be doing a little weeding, putting some mulch out in the raised beds, and doing a general tidy up. All irrigation timers are in place and should be watering every two days.

Wishing you all the best of April showers to come!

Julia Johnson
Pharmacy Garden Chair



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 3 — Sally Reynolds

April 8 — Karen Bookout

April 9 — Earl Mills

April 11 — Susan Bame

April 15 — Courtney Kieke

April 22 — Ann Allen

Sally Reynolds (April 3) wrote: "I begin my 81st year on April 3rd, grateful for good health, a happy family, lovely friends, brilliant ladies who love herbs, and a beautiful place to spend each day, surrounded by our woods and some herbs growing very nicely nearby!"

Susan Bame (April 11) sent a heart and said: "This is a big birthday for me. I'm 75. It makes me think about what I'm grateful for and for all my many blessings. My family and friends and pets. My home and nature. I am especially thankful that I joined our wonderful group and have made so many new friends and learned so much about plants. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul. "



Courtney Kieke (April 15) wrote a birthday letter :

"Dearest Herbie Friends,

I am celebrating my 48th lap around the sun, and it has certainly been a great one. I am so grateful for the Pioneer Unit, the Horticulture Study Group, and the many friendships I have made because of a mutual love and fascination with plants. I admire you all so much and look forward to learning from each of you.

"To my 'twin,' Julia Johnson: Nothing is more flattering than being mistaken for you. If only I knew as much as you about plants, I would never correct anyone who mistook my identity. Alas, there is only one you! I cherish our friendship.

Warmly,

Courtney Kieke"

HORTICULTURE STUDY GROUP

Lemony Herbs

Lemongrass and Lemon Catnip: Some Basics

Wendy Matthews, Royceanna Kendall, and Jill Quimby provided the program on the botany and chemistry of lemongrass and lemon catnip. Lemongrass is in the poaceae family while lemon catnip is in the lamiaceae family. Lemongrass loves hot weather and full sun as it is native to Malaysia, but it is not frost hardy. Lemon catnip benefits from some shade, particularly in the afternoon. Both plants require watering until established (although in a drought both will continue to need watering). Lemon catnip has less nepetalactone (the intoxicating scent adored by cats) than regular catnip. Both lemongrass and lemon catnip contain the chemical citral, which provides the lemon scent. We also learned that a hedge of lemongrass deters copperheads (they don't like the smell).

HSG Growers are getting their lemony herbs planted, measured, and photographed for the start of the study. Mrs. Burns Lemon Basil was not happy with the cold weather and consequently, a few growers lost this plant. Phoebe Lake is buying seed and hopes to grow replacement plants.

Submitted by Madeline Johnson



Lemon Catnip in the Garden

CULINARY GROUP



The culinary group met on Wednesday, April 1, continuing our preparations for our September Unit program. We have very much enjoyed all the foods that go along with tea and will be delighted to share in September. All are welcome to attend our meetings held the first Wednesday of the month at 10:00 in Menke House. Come join us for a party every month.

Belinda Weatherly

SPRING FIELD TRIP

Our spring field trip is planned for Tuesday, April 14. We will start at 9:00 a.m. by touring the gardens at Henry Flowers' house in Brenham. We will then go on to the Sensory Garden at Brenham Elementary School where Serena Speaker will lead the tour.

We can then find somewhere for lunch: suggestions are welcomed.

Henry has recommended carpooling to his house as parking is limited, but we can look at that when we know how many people have signed up.

If you would like to join the group please email Pat Cox at bmerlynne@cvctx.com.

Pat Cox



THYME WELL SPENT

Thanks again to all the members who volunteered in the Shoppe for the big sale, and a special thanks to Patty Mills who stepped up in an emergency to cashier all day that crazy Friday. Despite a slow Saturday, the Shoppe sales exceeded last year's total.

We will be selling jams, herb blends, and a few other left overs at the April meeting at half price. So please bring some cash or a check to the meeting.

Leslie Conrads, Thyme Well Spent Chair

SENSORY GARDEN

We will meet on Thursday, April 16, from 9 to 11:00 a.m. at the Sensory Garden to continue working on weeding, spreading mulch, and other necessary gardening tasks. Please come and join us in this beautiful time of the year.

Serena Speaker, Sensory Garden Chair

I'm trying to plan our last outing in the Sensory Garden with the second graders. Mrs. Gardner has requested an activity for Thursday, April 16, in the morning. We will need volunteers to make it happen for the kiddos. Please let me know if you can help.

Debi Meschwitz

From the news: A HUGE shout out to Bluebonnet Garden Club, Herb Society of America Pioneer Unit, and Trees of Central Texas for working together to benefit the students in celebrating Arbor Day at Brenham Elementary School.

Trees of Central Texas donated a tree to the Bluebonnet Garden Club and the Pioneer Unit of the Herb Society of America at the Sensory Garden to recognize Arbor Day on April 24, 2026. Tim and Wendy Huntzinger, who manage Trees of Central Texas, were very gracious to donate this flowering tree for the elementary students to learn about trees that flower. The Sensory Garden was begun in January 2008 with the help of Pioneer Unit members along with a host of community supporters. The Boy Scouts used the laying of the irrigation lines for a community project; most of the lines are still working well! The Garden provides an opportunity for children at the Brenham Elementary School to use their five senses in the garden to "see, smell, touch, taste and hear" the plants. We usually have three activities per year for the 2nd grade classes to engage in gardening activities. The Pioneer Unit is very proud to continue to manage the garden for the students to enjoy with monthly workdays to maintain the raised beds, provide new plants, perform weeding tasks, and supervise the watering tasks. We are grateful to the school for all their help with mowing and protecting our water system when there are freeze forecasts. The garden has raised beds that make it accessible for all children to enjoy the beautiful plants.

It takes a village, and we appreciate all the members of both garden clubs and Trees of Central Texas for their efforts to ensure the students understand and celebrate Arbor Day.

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Do you know a deserving student?

Each year the Pioneer Unit awards academic scholarships to deserving high school seniors or college students studying Plant Sciences or Horticulture or Environmental Sciences with a focus on Botany or Food Science or a closely related academic discipline. See the application form below or find it on the Pioneer Unit website (herbsocietypioneer.org).

For more information, contact PVLake@gmail.com.

Phoebe Lake
Scholarships Chair

Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit Madalene Hill Scholarship Academic Scholarship Award \$1000 - \$4000

For High School Seniors or College Students studying Plant Sciences or Horticulture or Environmental Sciences with a focus on Botany or Food Sciences or a closely related discipline.

APPLICATION FORM

Please note that ALL sections must be completed and supporting materials enclosed for your application to be considered.

1. Personal Information

Your name: (last) _____ (first) _____ (middle) _____
School _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone Number _____

2. Academic Information: list school or university now attending and any previous attended

Name of High School or University	Location	Dates Attended
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If attending university, what is your major: _____

3. Academic Performance:

Grade Point Average _____ (Enclose an official transcript from school)

4. Recommendations:

Have one of your professors or guidance counselors write a letter of recommendation supporting your application and enclose with the application (must be on school stationery in a sealed envelope for confidentiality to be valid).

5. Careers and Interest Summary from Applicant:

Write two or three paragraphs summarizing your short-term and long-term career goals. Include any examples of special interests or projects in plants, herbs, gardening,

Deadline for Submission: May 1, 2026

Mail to: Pioneer Unit of the Herb Society of America
P.O. Box 23 Round Top, TX 78954
Attn: Phoebe Lake


April 2026

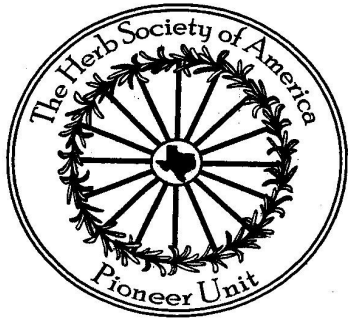


Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory Garden	HSG = Horticulture Study Group		1 CG Menke House	2	3 FH Workday 9-11:00	4
5 	6	7	8	9 Pioneer Unit Meeting	10	11
12	13	14	15 EdCon San Antonio	16 SG Workday 9-11:00 EdCon	17 EdCon	18
19	20	21	22	23 HSG 10:00-noon	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
CG = Culinary Group FH = Festival Hill SG = Sensory	HSG = Horticulture Study Group				1 FH Workday 9-11:00	2 New Ulm Bee Jubilee 
3	4	5	6 CG Menke House	7 Pioneer Unit Meeting	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 SG Workday 9-11:00	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 HSG 10:00-noon	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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PIONEER PATHS

Volume 33

Editor: Linda L. Rowlett, Ph.D.

Pioneer Paths is a publication of The Herb Society of America, Pioneer Unit. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$10.00 per year.

The Mission Statement of The Herb Society of America: "To promote the knowledge, use, and delight of herbs through educational programs, research, and sharing the experience of its members with the community."

Chair—Diana Sellers

Vice Chair Programs—Tory Farley
Secretary—Joanna Hagler

Vice Chair Membership—Cammie Beierle
Treasurer—Royceanna Kendall

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM HSA

The Herb Society of America has a variety of publications available to members. Check them out at herbsociety.org:

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HSA's premier publication, The Herbarist, is an annual journal packed with informative articles, beautiful images, and fascinating content from all around the herb world. Visit The Herbarist pages at herbsociety.org to learn more about submitting articles, advertising, and sponsoring authors in this publication.

HSA Quick Fact Sheets

HSA's Quick Fact Sheets are 1–2 page brief but informative lists of the most important facts of various herbs.

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HSA's Essential Guides are 30–50 page detailed guides on herbs, containing fascinating in-depth facts plus historical and botanic data.

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HSA's Notable Native™ Profiles are selected yearly by the Notable Native Herb committee and features the informative facts about each selection.